THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) State Government of Madhya Pradesh has given 30 acres of land at Jabalpur Airport and 355.66 acres of land at Khajuraho Airport to Airports Authority of India (AAI).

The development work has been completed at Jabalpur Airport and runway extension has been completed at Khajuraho Airport.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) It has been decided to give 5.87 acres land on lease to State Government of Madhya Pradesh at a token fee of Re. 1/- subject to certain conditions.

Indigenous pilot training

814. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the requirement of pilots in the next five years in the country and how will it be met by the Ministry; and

(b) the reasons for getting pilot training by Boeing and Airbus abraod and not in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) The requirement of pilots is expected to grow with the growth in civil aviation sector and depends on number of aircraft inducted from time to time and their continued operations. The steps taken by the Ministry to meet the future requirement of pilots include increasing the training capacity of Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Udan Academy (IGRUA), setting up of a new pilot training academy, relaxation of requirement of flying hours from 250 to 200 hours, relaxation in the upper age from 60 to 61 years subject to medical fitness and permitting appointment of foreign pilots.

(b) since simulators of Airbus and Boeing types of aircraft are not available with private airlines in India, pilots are sent for training on Boeing and Airbus abroad.

New aircrafts in Gulf-Kerala Sector

815. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of service which are being operated by Air India to Gulf sector from Thiruvananthapuram International airport;

(b) the number of carriers on service in the sector which are age old and whether Air India deploy new aeroplanes in Gulf-Kerala sector;

(c) the number of foreign airline companies that sought sanctions to operate services to Gulf sector from Thiruvananthapuram International Airport, the reasons, if any, for non-granting of permission to other carriers; and

(d) whether Government consider to permit the international freight companies who sought permission to operate services in the Gulf sector from Thiruvananthapuram?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Air India operates 10 services to Gulf sector from Thiruvananthapuram International Airport. Besides this, Air India Express, a subsidiary company of Air India has also started its operations from Thiruvananthapuram to Gulf sector from 29.4.2005.

(b) The average age of Air India's fleet of A310-300 deployed from Thiruvananthapuram is about 15 years whereas the fleet of Air India Express comprises of new B737-800 aircraft.

(c) Four foreign airlines *viz.* Gulf Air, Kuwait Airways, Oman Air and Qatar Airways are already oprating their services to Thiruvananthapuram from Gulf destinations. Traffic rights are granted from time to time keeping in view the market demand and interests of the airlines and political/ diplomatic considerations.

(d) The Government follows an Open Sky Policy for all cargo operations. Accordingly, foreign airlines are permitted to operate any number of freighter services to/from India.

Helicopter services to religious places

†816. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal for introducing helicopter services to make smooth access to religious places and tourist sites located in remote areas is under consideration of Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.